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PIONEER



Celebrating the Legacy of
JONATHAN BROWNING

Published by the Sons of Utah Pioneers

PIONEER

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The mission of the National Society of the Sons of Utah Pioneers is to preserve the memory and heritage of the early pioneers of the Utah Territory. We honor the pioneers for their faith in God, devotion to family, loyalty to church and country, hard work and service to others, courage in adversity, personal integrity, and unyielding determination. The society also honors present-day pioneers worldwide in many walks of life who exemplify these same qualities of character. It is further intended to teach these same qualities to the youth, who will be tomorrow's pioneers.

Published by the Sons of Utah Pioneers

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President's Message

BY RICHARD O. CHRISTIANSEN



What a great opportunity it is for me to greet all of you in this beautiful spring

season. A great symposium is now past us, and the Hole-in-the Rock Trek participants returned home safely after having a marvelous experience remembering those dedicated pioneers on the San Juan Trails.

The focus of our terrific magazine this time is the great Browning family—the inventors of the military machine gun. Most every military man or woman has spent time on a range with many rifles, shotguns, pistols, and many different machine guns.

At our home in Centerville, we stand outside, looking up at the hillside, and listen to the rapid staccato of rifles and machine guns firing at targets. To me, it is a soothing sound, and it talks to me of the energy and interest being brought to this activity, with individuals and groups striving to improve and be trained in achieving greater proficiency. I have never been a member of the National Rifle Association, but I have loved the feel of a machine gun on many firing ranges.

In 1955, I spent a year as a young man in Infantry Officer Candidate School. During that

training it was my lot to spend a week on a machine gun firing range. We looked at every machine gun the Army had, from the small Tommy gun to a .50-caliber machine gun. It was a great experience, and I loved every minute. We learned how an MG worked, how it fed ammunition to itself, and how to disassemble it and reassemble it, even while blindfolded.

Working with my fellow soldiers, I gained a great and very personal appreciation for the inventive genius of men like the Brownings.

What person is there among our group who has never become jittery at the thought of owning a world-class Browning automatic shotgun? It becomes a priceless possession, a true “keeper.” During those days

many years ago, I gained a deep love and appreciation of Browning machine guns. The Browning weapons, including the BAR (Browning Assault Rifle), literally won many battles. Inventors are still hard at work, applying their genius to improvements that will continue the mastery of weapons. I love peace and always have. God bless those dedicated geniuses who strive to give us the best there is of armaments and protections. Enjoy the magazine; then visit the Browning collection-museum at the Old Train Depot in Ogden.

I love you all. May our God continue to inspire us, grant us the peace we strive for, and lead us in our devotion to the Sons of Utah Pioneers. ▣



Special thanks

Pioneer magazine would like to extend a special thanks to **Betseylee Browning** of Mountain Green, Utah, for helping provide content and images for this issue. She has spent countless hours researching and preserving the legacy of the Browning family. Her dedication was instrumental in the preservation of the David Elias Browning farm house, which has been relocated to Fort Buenaventura in Ogden (see page 12 this issue). Her work as Vice President of the Jonathan Browning Family Association includes a Jonathan Browning CD with years of genealogical research and 1000 photographs; a James Green Browning CD (brother of Jonathan Browning); and a 290-page PDF file of 4,676 identified descendants of Jonathan Browning posted online at jonathanbrowning.org.

Thank you Betseylee!

JONATHAN BROWNING

Mormon Gunsmith



Ogden, Utah
Mt. Ben Lomand



Artwork by Rob Adamson



Nauvoo, Illinois

Brushy Fork, Tenne

BY SUSAN EASTON BLACK

*professor of Church History and Doctrine
at Brigham Young University and author*

The Browning name has been synonymous with creative gunsmithing for generations. From the repeating rifle to the automatic rifle and the aircraft cannon, the Browning Arms Company has distinguished itself in armaments for nearly 130 years. The family tradition of creating exceptional firearms began with Jonathan Browning, the inventor of a repeating rifle and countless other firearms.¹ Family records and surviving guns evidence his unique gift as an inventive gunsmith.

Jonathan Browning was born and reared in rural Brushy Fork, Tennessee, in the early 19th century, amid scattered, nearly starving farmers.² Observing his father's struggle to reap a harvest from the rocky hillside led him to conclude he never wanted to be a farmer. But what else could he do? Brushy Fork was a community in name only and lacked even a schoolhouse and a church. Employment opportunities were few, and a career other than farming seemed impossible.

However, in Browning's early teens, a challenging opportunity presented itself when a neighbor discarded an unusable flintlock rifle. Even though the gun was missing parts and the lock was broken, Jonathan offered to work for one week for the neighbor in exchange for the discarded rifle. He later claimed that week was the only enthusiastic farming he ever did. Jonathan took the gun home, made the missing parts, repaired it, and then sold it back to the neighbor for four dollars.³

As word spread of his mechanical ability, Jonathan was invited to be an apprentice to a blacksmith. During the next few years he learned the fundamentals of hand-forging, welding, brazing, tempering, and soldering. By age 19, six-foot, well-muscled Jonathan thought himself a competent gun maker, even though he had never met a gunsmith. However, his confidence waned when he saw a rifle made by a real gunsmith, stamped "Samuel Porter-Nashville."⁴ Anxious to learn from a master craftsman, he borrowed his father's horse, rode 30 miles to Nashville, and convinced Mr. Porter to apprentice him without pay. After three months of apprenticeship, the former tinkerer Jonathan Browning had mastered the trade.

*Artwork by George Wesley
Browning*



*Jonathan Browning's home in
Davidson Co. Tenn. 1830 -*



When Mr. Porter offered a partnership in his business, Jonathan refused, as he envisioned himself a successful gunsmith in Brushy Fork with his own shop. He returned home to the rural countryside, married his sweetheart, Elizabeth Stalcup, and began a successful gun business.⁵ His success in Tennessee ended when reports circulated in the community of limitless land free for the taking in frontier Illinois.⁶ One by one his customers and then family members joined the westward migration to Illinois. Finally 28-year-old Jonathan closed his shop, loaded two wagons, and moved his supplies and family about 400 miles to Illinois.

The Brownings from Tennessee quickly made new friends and acquaintances who were anxious to barter for the talents of the young gunsmith. His shop was an immediate success, and he delighted in repairing lock, stock, and barrel. However, he wanted more from his business. He wanted to create new firearms.

Living at a time when flintlock guns were being eclipsed by the invention of the percussion cap and pre-loaded paper cartridges, Jonathan believed a multi-shot gun was possible and went to work to make his dream a reality. Although confined to a small shop, using his forge, anvil, vise, foot lathe, and hand tools that littered his bench, he invented

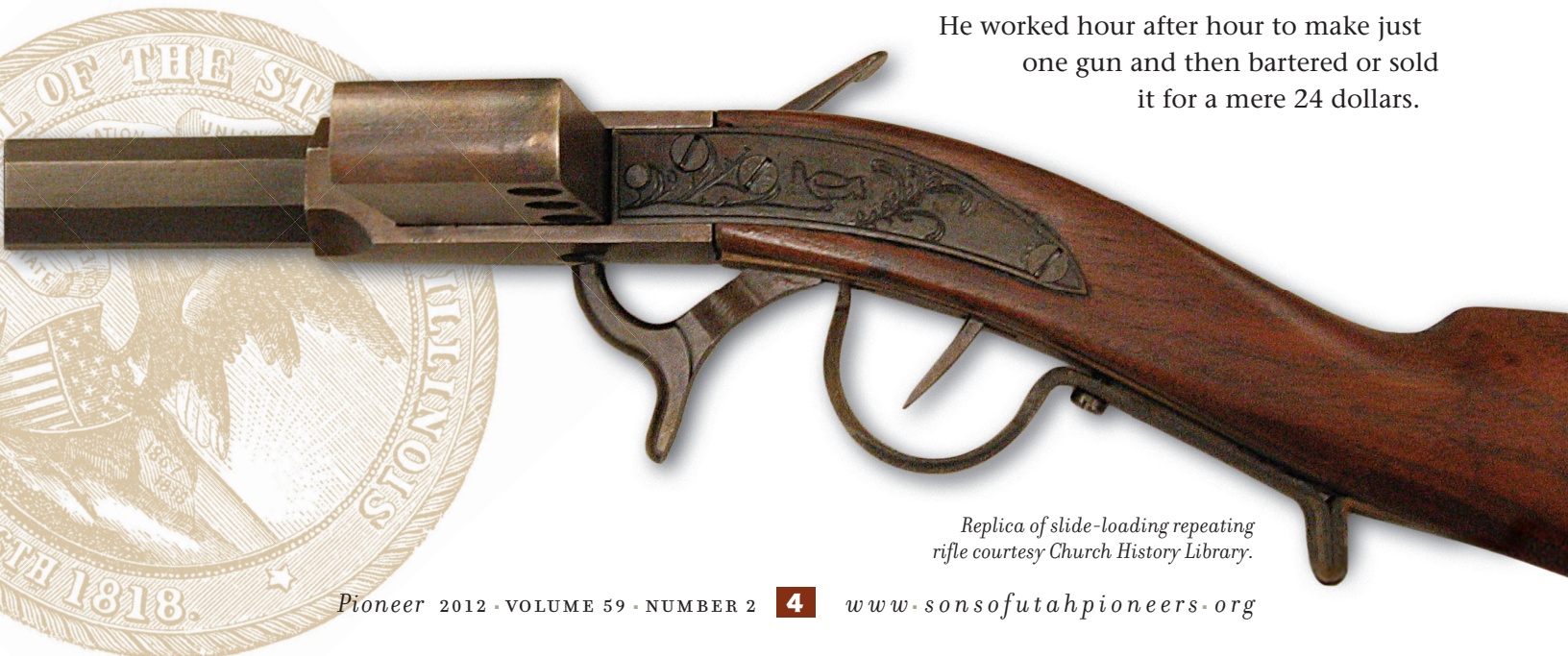


Elizabeth Stalcup

a simple, practical repeating rifle and a six-shot repeater. Today these guns are a curio, but in the 1830s their continuous fire was unequaled by any contemporary gun found along the frontier of Illinois.⁷

The repeating rifle had a number of ingenious features that became the trademark of Browning firearms. The most notable features were simplicity and operating ease. The rifle's five-shot magazine had a rectangular iron bar with holes fitted to accommodate the hand loads. The bar slid through an aperture at the breech and was manually operated, permitting loading in advance for five comparatively fast shots. The six-shot repeater operated by loading the powder and ball into the cylinder and placing a cap onto each nipple. The rifle was cocked by drawing back the hammer and then manually rotating the cylinder after each shot.

These inventions brought considerable local fame to Browning and resulted in orders for many guns.⁸ As Jonathan was energetic, his business thrived as he personally customized each lock, stock, and barrel for the buyers. Although the lands and grooves were cleanly cut and the locks worked smoothly, hammer marks from his hours of pounding still show on the rifles he made. These guns reveal his partiality to the octagon gun barrel. It is estimated that each gun took Jonathan two weeks to create from start to finish. He worked hour after hour to make just one gun and then bartered or sold it for a mere 24 dollars.



Replica of slide-loading repeating rifle courtesy Church History Library.



Single-Shot Pistol Under Hammer
Made by Jonathan Browning

Nevertheless, the repeating rifle and six-shot repeater brought him instant local prominence. Jonathan enjoyed having his opinion valued on almost any subject. He was elected by his constituents to the office of justice of the peace and relished being called Judge Browning. This position put him in contact with young lawyers, including Abraham Lincoln, who stayed overnight at his home on at least two occasions.

On one occasion Lincoln said, "Judge, somebody told me that a youngster in the neighborhood broke his arm yesterday and you set it. Do you fix anything that breaks—plow, gun, bone?" Jonathan laughed and nodded. "It's a fine life you're leading here, Judge, mending anything that breaks. Looks funny at first glimpse to see a man welding a broken gun part for a farmer one day and the next day setting a bone for the farmer's son."

Jonathan replied, "Bonesetting's a lot easier. Nature does most of that welding. But if it's two pieces of iron, you've got to blow up the forge and pound. Nature won't help with that."⁹

Browning's position as judge also brought him into contact with exiled Mormons who were arriving daily from Missouri in the winter of 1839. These exiles had been subjected to an extermination order issued by the Missouri governor,

which stated that the Mormons must be treated as enemies and must be exterminated or driven from the state.¹⁰ Curious about Mormonism and his Mormon neighbors who were settling 43 miles north of Quincy in the dismal swamp they called Nauvoo, Jonathan boarded a steamboat to venture up river.

His meeting the Mormon Prophet Joseph Smith led to Browning's conversion to Mormonism. The reputation he had enjoyed in [Illinois] took a dramatic turn for the worse when news reached the community that Jonathan Browning was now a Mormon. Neighbors shunned the judge and his family, who felt ostracized by those they had once called friends. Seeking happiness with friends in his new faith, Jonathan sold his gun shop and home and moved to Nauvoo. He purchased a half-lot on the east side of Main Street, where he and his family, including his wife and nine children, lived in a two-room log cabin until their brick house was built.¹¹

During his six years of residence in Nauvoo, Jonathan was the famed gunsmith of Main Street. He made one rifle after another for his customers, always experimenting with improving mechanisms for the firearms. However, the most unique feature of his Nauvoo guns was an engraved plate

on the stock reading “Holiness to the Lord—Our Preservation.”¹² One of these valued antique guns today would be a great treasure for any collector. When friction ignited between the Mormons and their nearby neighbors in 1846, Jonathan did not react by loading his gun and retaliating. Instead, he and his family followed the counsel of Brigham Young and fled from Nauvoo, willingly abandoning their property without recompense. He merely closed his shop and took his tools with him across the Mississippi River. He trekked through marshy loess hills of Iowa with other Mormon refugees, enduring the pains and sufferings of the wintry days and the chilling nights. Yet he did not turn back to Illinois. He forged on to the Missouri River and settled temporarily in Council Bluffs.

When the Mormon Battalion was being mustered into the United States Army in 1846 to fight in the War with Mexico, Jonathan wanted to volunteer and lined up with the other recruits. Brigham Young took him by the arm and led him aside, saying, “Brother Jonathan, we need you here.”¹³ Brigham wanted him to stay behind in Iowa to make and repair the guns necessary for the migrating pioneers. Jonathan’s advertisement in the local *Frontier Guardian* newspaper read:

“Improved firearms revolving rifles and pistols; also slide guns, from 5 to 25 shooters. All on an improved plan.”¹⁴ It is estimated that he made 400 guns.

It was not until 1852 that Jonathan was invited by Mormon Church leaders to continue his journey to the West. He left his gunsmithing in Iowa and trekked to the Rocky Mountains as captain of one of the pioneering companies. He arrived in the Salt Lake Valley with six wagons and nearly 600 dollars cash, carefully hidden beneath a false bottom in a flour barrel. With that money he was able to start his business ventures again and was soon considered a prosperous Mormon.

Jonathan settled with his family in Ogden, Utah, where he once again opened a gunsmith shop. His famous son John M. Browning, credited with over 120 patents for firearms, worked with his father in the gunshop.¹⁵ Remembering his father, John said, “We ridiculed some of the guns we fixed, and I damned some of them when Pappy wasn’t near, but it never occurred to us to make better ones. He was too old, and I was too young. [He] died of weariness. He had worked so hard



RES. OF JONATHAN BROWNING



Nauvoo Legion sword; 1844
Colt Revolver *owned by William Clayton*



Revolving Action Rifle *made by Jonathan Browning, 1858, Ogden City, Utah*

Images courtesy William C. Montgomery (5, 7). See "The Making of John Moses Browning," posted July 1, 2011, at www.thetruthaboutguns.com/2011/07/william-c-montgomery/the-making-of-john-moses-browning/

that, finally tired out, he went to sleep and didn't wake up."¹⁶

For nearly 100 years the contributions of Jonathan Browning were extolled in family circles, and a few of his innovative guns were displayed in the Browning Armory. In the 1970s his descendants decided to acknowledge his life and contributions in a more public manner. Knowing that old Nauvoo was being restored to its 1840 grandeur and that thousands of tourists were enjoying the free demonstrations given by volunteer brick makers, blacksmiths, potters, wheelwrights, and other craftsmen, they decided to finance the authentic restoration of Jonathan Browning's Nauvoo home and gunshop.

The two-story brick structure was restored to its original 1840s architectural design. Even the

block house that he and his family first lived in was restored in historic detail with rope beds, barrels, and candles. Most visitors believe that the Browning reconstruction is one of the finest additions to Old Nauvoo. Inside the brick structure are a number of guns made by Jonathan and four generations of his posterity. Visitors can view the slide or harmonica gun, the forerunner of the repeating rifle, and a .44 caliber pistol, just to name a few. Replica forge, bellows, tools, and equipment like those used by Browning to fashion guns are also displayed. Live demonstrations of rifling a gun barrel, using the forge, the hammering process, and heat-treating a rod are highlights in each presentation.

If you haven't toured the restored Jonathan Browning gunshop in Nauvoo, Illinois, make plans



JONATHAN BROWNING'S EARLY GUNS *include the slide-loading repeating rifle, produced about 1847. In .45 caliber, its five-shot capacity made it a formidable weapon in the days of muzzle loading single-shot rifles.*

Detail of inscription shows this rifle was made by Jonathan Browning, following his son John's patent.

Rifles on display at the John M. Browning Firearms Museum, Union Station, Ogden, Utah.

Jonathan Browning

to visit. You will be intrigued by its authenticity and its tribute to the famed 1840s gunsmith. ☑

Excerpts from Susan Easton Black, "Jonathan Browning, Mormon Gunsmith," Muzzle Blasts Online, August/September 1997, vol. 2, no. 4.

1 *A History of Browning Guns from 1831* (St. Louis: Browning Arms Co., 1942), 11.

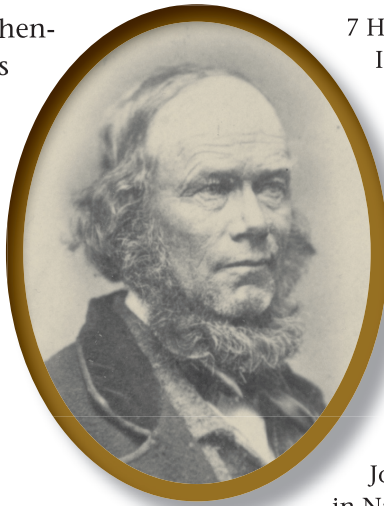
2 Ancestral File, Church History Library, Salt Lake City.

3 Curt Gentry and John Browning, *John M. Browning, American Gunmaker: An Illustrated Biography of the Man and His Guns* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1964), 4-5.

4 Gentry and Browning, 5.

5 Jonathan Browning married on Nov. 9, 1829, at age 21.

6 None of the guns Jonathan Browning made during his years in Brushy Fork are known to be in existence.



7 His slide gun can be seen at the Rock Island Arsenal. His other guns are seen in the Browning Arms Company in Ogden, Utah.

8 *History of Browning*, 13.

9 Gentry and Browning, 13-14.

10 Governor Lilburn W. Boggs's executive order issued in the state of Missouri, Oct. 27, 1838.

11 Nauvoo Restoration, Inc. Jonathan Browning script, Nauvoo, Illinois.

12 The gun is displayed in the restored Jonathan Browning home on Main Street in Nauvoo, Illinois.

13 Gentry and Browning, 18.

14 *Frontier Guardian*, Sept. 19, 1846, Kaneshville, Iowa.

15 John M. Browning was one of 22 children born to Mormon pioneer gunsmith Jonathan Browning.

16 Gentry and Browning, 63.

Jonathan Browning gunshop photo below courtesy Kenneth R. Mays.



Nauvoo, Illinois



Elizabeth Browning's china.

**Restored Jonathan
Browning gunshop
and home in
Nauvoo, Illinois.**

Photos courtesy Kenneth R. Mays.

Ogden City, Dec. 20, 1857

Diary Entry

Bro. D. H. Wells,

With due respects I will sojest to you a plan that I think might be adopted for Blowing up Magazines, and the wisdom that you can command will decide whether it would be advisable to adopt it or not the plan would be to take a rifle that would carry a 1/2 ball or larger and make a lone ball of Iron or perhaps pewter or block tin (1) would do, and bore the ball from the foremost end with a small bit down near the lower end this bit should be the right size to set a pivot in that a percussion cap would fit and after boring this small hole then take a nose bit some larger and bore it down near the bottom on the small hole leaving just enough of the small hole in the bottom set the pivot in on which to set the cap. Then cut a screw in the upper end of the large hole to screw in a piece of lead. Then set in the pivot or standard and place the cap upon it and fill the hole cavity around standard with powder and screw the lead down nearly to the cap and round it off to a nice rounding point, then the projectile is complete and suppose the magazine to be in a wagon in boxes kegs, or what not This ball could be fired from a proper gun to the distance of 1/2 mile in to the magazine and the explosion would commence the instant that the ball strikes a hard substance and the powder in the ball would carry a train for some distance. Now if though advisable I would make some experiments on the subject or any other careful workman could do the same, and those balls could be carried safe as a common ball and fired at will, a good ranger would do though for a correct long shot it should be a good large bored rifle a smooth bore would not do as the ball would not be likely to go straight, and foremost with due respect the foregoing is submitted for your consideration.

And I as ever hope to remain your brother in the Gospel of Salvation.

Jonathan Browning

"I was startled to find Ogden resident Jonathan Browning, one of the West's premier gunsmiths and patriarchs of what would later become America's most famous firearms dynasty. In Yale's Beinecke library I found a fascinating December 1857 letter in which Jonathan Browning offered the Nauvoo Legion the design of an innovative aerial torpedo for use in exploding army ammunition wagons. Browning offered this design at roughly the same time that Brigham Young was writing to the same Legion commander to advocate the use of medieval longbows and crossbows for mountain warfare. What a contrast! It is ironic that the company later founded by Browning's sons produced or licensed virtually every automatic weapon used by U.S. armed forces from the late 1800s through World War II." ▼

—William P. MacKinnon, "The Utah War and Its Mountain Meadows Massacre: Lessons Learned, Surprises Encountered," FARMS Review, volume 20, issue 2, 237–51 (Provo, Utah: Maxwell Institute, 2008).

David Elias Browning Farm House

Originally located by Birch Creek on Old Post Road in Ogden, Utah, the David Elias Browning Farm House was moved to the grounds of Fort Buena Ventura in 2007. David Elias Browning (1829–1901) was the son of Jonathan Browning and Elizabeth Stalcup. He was also the half brother of John Moses Browning, the famous gun inventor. David, born in Davidson County, Tennessee, moved with his family to Adams County, Illinois, and later to Nauvoo, Illinois, and Mosquito Creek, Iowa, before settling in Ogden, Utah. In Ogden, David married Charilla Abigail Abbott. David was a lifelong member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and Charilla was a convert to the Church. David's occupation was farming. This cabin stood on his farm, but he lived most of the

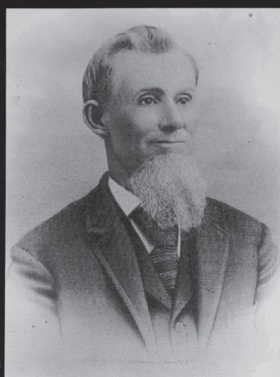
year in Ogden and traveled daily by horse and buggy to the farm. He was commissioned by Brigham Young to be the sealer of weights and measures (scales tester) for Weber County. He was also commissioned a Justice of the Territory of Utah. He was a member of the Grand Jury and also served in the Territorial Militia (Nauvoo Legion). Charilla (1829–1914) was Ogden's first school teacher and lived at Fort Buena Ventura, then called Brown's Fort, before she married David. This farmhouse also served as a post office from 1888–1902.

Excerpts from "Fort Buena Ventura," at www.co.weber.ut.us/parks/fortb/history.php

In 2005 Betsey Lee Browning learned from Gene Browning—a descendant born in the home—that the David Elias Browning farmhouse still existed. The owner of the land where the house stood needed to clear the land, so Betsey Lee began efforts to relocate and restore the home. The owner donated the structure, and two years later a site was secured at Fort Buena Ventura. Grant money was obtained to move and renovate the home. With close attention given to ensure the restoration was historically accurate, the building is now readily accessible to the public.



David Elias Browning (1829-1901), son of Jonathan Browning and Elizabeth Stalcup, was a native of Tennessee. He was an early Mormon pioneer and farmer in Ogden, Utah. In January of 1853, he married Charilla Abbott. David affectionately called her "Rily." They were the parents of eight children. Around 1874, David built this cedar clad farmhouse with handmade nails and local brick on his large farm at Old Post Road near Burch Creek in South Ogden. David was a half-brother to John Moses Browning, the famous gun inventor. David was a Sealer of weights and measures, a Sergeant-major in the first Utah territorial militia, an accomplished violinist, and a detailed journal writer. His journal includes an entry dated January 10, 1870, describing the first railroad ride for him and his wife at the opening of the Utah Central Railroad. The narrative notes, "We had quite a celebration---". David and Charilla also had a brick home on 29th Street in Ogden. David Elias was dubbed "Browning's Papoose" by the Shoshone Chieftain "Little Soldier" because of his kindness to the tribe.



Charilla Abbott Browning (1829-1914), daughter of Stephen Abbott and Abigail Smith, was a native of New York. She was an early Mormon pioneer and arrived in Utah in 1849. For some time, she lived in Brown's Fort, now known as Fort Buenaventura. Charilla was the first school teacher in Weber County. Of this experience Charilla wrote, "It fell to my lot to



teach the first school in my section. It was in a small log house plastered with mud, having two small windows, and literally a ground floor. The benches were of slabs. We had few books, and pens were made of chicken quills. I gathered the alphabet from scraps of paper and pasted the letters on paddles for the A,B,C class. In winter paths

were made for the pupils by taking oxen and dragging logs through the snow."

This farmhouse was an early post office in the area for a period of time. To preserve the home and its history the house was moved to this site in 2007.



Special thanks to B. J. and Karren Florek and family for their generous donation of this house.

Detail of plaque in photo below.

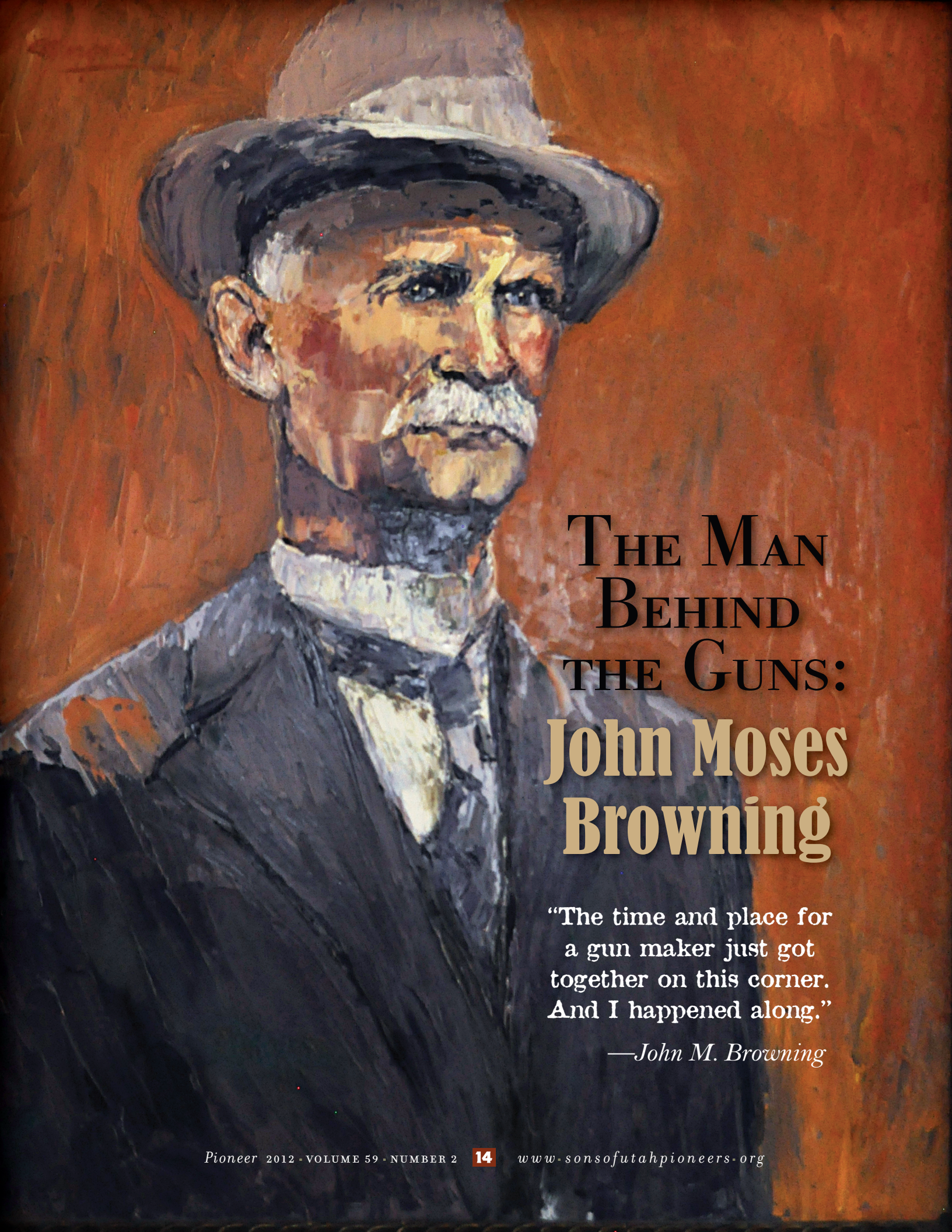
The house of David Elias Browning was moved Tuesday, February 20, 2007, and everything went so well. We were escorted by the sheriff's department and Quest trucks who lifted all the lines. Everyone stopped to watch and people came out of their houses and businesses.

"We went down Harrison and took a left on 30th and headed down to Washington. Then we went down to 24th, took a left, and went over the 24th Street viaduct and turned down to Fort Buena Ventura." 



See "Davis Elias Browning Farm House," at www.jonathanbrowning.org





THE MAN
BEHIND
THE GUNS:
**John Moses
Browning**

“The time and place for
a gun maker just got
together on this corner.
And I happened along.”

—*John M. Browning*

In France, his last name is considered a suitable substitution for the word *pistol*. He held 128 gun patents and designed and built 80 firearms—44 of them manufactured by Winchester. It can be said without exaggeration that John Moses Browning's guns made Winchester. And Colt. And Remington, Savage, and Fabrique Nationale (FN). Not to mention his namesake company, Browning. Few are the gun manufacturers that have not bought a license to use one of Browning's many patents. His work includes the full spectrum of single-shot, lever-action, pump-action, semi-automatic, and full-automatic firearms, with calibers ranging from .22 rimfires to 37mm cannon shells. The 1911 .45 pistol, Browning Automatic Rifle, 1917 .30, and .50 caliber machine guns are just some of his guns that became part and parcel in the U.S. arsenal during several conflicts. His final design at the time of his death—the Browning Hi-Power pistol—would become a precedent for today's high-cap 9mm pistols.

These innovative guns sprang from the mind and hands of a man who was born in an era of black powder and percussion caps. During his era, the average gun design typically took two years from drawing board to prototype. For John Moses Browning, it was not unusual to turn out many finished firearms within a single year—or for all of them to instantly become best sellers. He once made a daring deal with Winchester Arms to design a new rifle to replace the aging Model 73 within 30 days. If he succeeded, he would earn \$20,000, but if he failed, he would surrender his design for free. Browning easily made the deadline, and the Model 92 became part of the great line of Winchester rifles.

A talented lineage

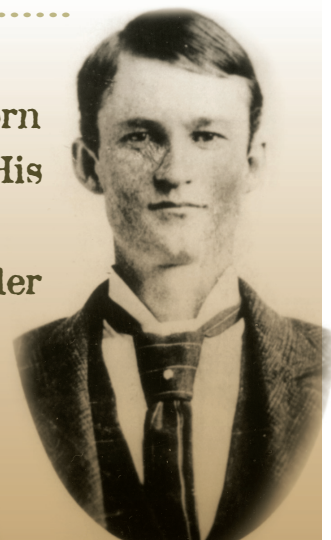
His father, Jonathan Browning, was a born mechanic and an accomplished gunsmith in his own right. His philosophy was to always strive

for functional simplicity in design. In 1832 he designed and manufactured a multi-shot percussion cap rifle. The rifle had a sideways magazine that came in a 5-, 10-, or 25-shot capacity. Using a thumb lever, the shooter could advance the magazine to the next chamber, with the magazine pressed tightly against the bore to ensure a secured gas check. To appreciate this achievement wrought by simple blacksmith tools and Jonathan's superlative talent, one can compare his rifle with the failure of the Colt Revolving Rifle produced in 1855 by a fully equipped industrial factory. The Colt rifle, while innovative, could not maintain a gas check, leading to poor performance and misfires.

Jonathan brought his family from Brushy Fork, Tennessee, to Illinois in 1833. In 1840 he was introduced to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Following his conversion to the "Mormon" church, he settled in Nauvoo, Illinois, in 1842. His blacksmithing skills would later be put to good use by President of the Church Brigham Young, who asked Jonathan for help in repairing and providing tools and firearms for the Saints' exodus from

1855

John Moses Browning was born in Ogden, Utah. His contemporaries included **Alexander Graham Bell** (1847–1922) and **Thomas Edison** (1847–1931).





Nauvoo to Salt Lake Valley, Utah. Several of Jonathan's repeating rifles provided game and protection during the long journey west.

In 1852 Jonathan made the trek west and settled in Ogden, Utah. Shortly after his arrival he entered the practice of polygamy and took two additional wives. His second wife, Elisabeth Clark, gave birth to John Moses Browning on January 23, 1855.

Child prodigy

John started working in his father's shop at age six. By age seven he could identify every part on a firearm by name and function. After his mother taught him how to read and write, he began to take repair orders from customers. At age 10 he made his first crude gun from scrap lying about the shop. He and his brother Matt tested the gun by successfully bringing down several grouse for their father's breakfast. Six years later a passing freight driver gave him a high-quality shotgun that had been severely damaged during his journey. With great care and determination, John disassembled the wrecked firearm, and through reverse engineering he replaced, repaired, or rebuilt from scratch all the damaged parts. Of the experience, he related: "Finally the idea came. A good idea starts a celebration in the mind, and every nerve in the body seems to crowd up to see the fireworks. It was a good idea, one of the best I ever had, and so simple it made me ashamed of

1878

Browning Brothers took over gun making from their father. They built a small assembly plant at the corner of Spring and 7th streets (now Adams Avenue and 27th Street) in Ogden.

myself. Boy-like, I had been trying to do the job all at once with some kind of magic. And magic never made a gun that would work. I decided to take the gun apart, piece by piece, down to the last small screw, even though parts were mashed and twisted together. And when I did, finally finishing long after supper that night, the pieces all spread out before me on the bench, I examined each piece and discovered that there wasn't one that I couldn't make myself, if I had to. If I had been in school that day, I would have missed a valuable lesson."

In 1883, a traveling salesman from the Winchester Repeating Arms Company bought a used single-shot rifle made by Browning from a gun owner. He showed it to Mr. T.G. Bennett, the vice president and general manager of Winchester. Bennett was so impressed by the quality and the smooth action of the gun that he traveled all the way from New Haven, Connecticut, to Ogden, Utah, to meet John Browning personally. Arriving at the roughhewn, primitive Browning workshop, he entered into an agreement to purchase the rights to the rifle for \$8,000, a princely sum in those days. Thus began a 19-year relationship with John M. Browning and the Winchester Repeating Arms



Company. In a four-year period from 1884 to 1887, Browning sold 20 newly designed guns to Winchester. A two-year break occurred when John Moses Browning accepted a call from the Church to serve a two-year proselyting mission in Georgia. Notwithstanding almost being tarred and feathered on one occasion, he fulfilled his duty faithfully and returned to his vocation in March 1889.

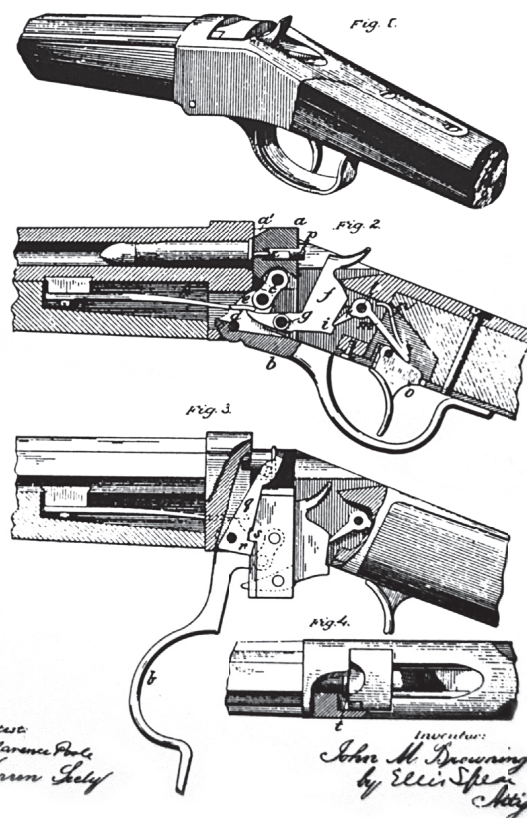
Many of the guns Winchester bought from him were never manufactured. The company simply could not produce that many models. Instead, Bennett bought all of Browning's designs for the express purpose of keeping them out of the hands of Winchester's competitors. As a result, Winchester practically had a monopoly on the finest American-made rifles in the market.

1879

John M. Browning patented his famous Model 7 Single-Shot Rifle and began production in Ogden. The patent was signed by Jonathan Browning, who died later that year.

No. 220,271.

Patented Oct. 7, 1879.



While Browning's lever-action designs externally differed little from previous Winchester firearms, internally there was no comparison. Browning's creations for Winchester permitted, among many other things, larger and more powerful caliber firearms to be offered to the public. John Browning was a great believer in Murphy's Law: "If anything can happen in a gun it probably will sooner or later," he once said. His firearms were deliberately built with twice the required safety margins as necessary. As a result, when the transition from black powder to smokeless occurred at the turn of the century, none of his black powder

rifle designs required any other modification than a stronger grade metal barrel.

Among his many firsts, Browning pioneered the first practical and successful pump-action shotgun, the Winchester Model 97. These were used as so-called "trench guns" by U.S. troops in World War I. Many of these shotguns were issued to soldiers skilled in trap shooting and were employed to shoot and deflect enemy hand grenades mid-air. One account tells of 200 entrenched U.S. troops armed with Model 97s using devastating 12-gauge shotgun fire at close range to stop a massive German infantry attack.

1884

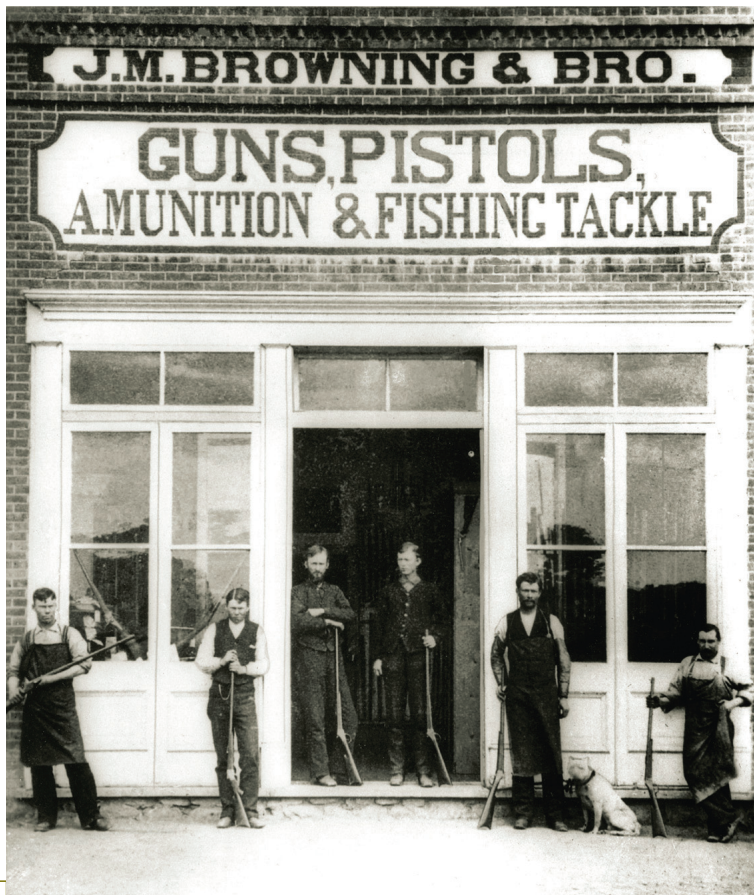
John M. Browning moved his gun shop to Ogden's Main Street between the Reed Hotel and the Orpheum Theater.

Pushing the envelope

Browning broke with Winchester in 1902 when Bennett was reluctant to produce Browning's remarkable recoil-operated, semi-automatic shotgun. This revolutionary shotgun scared the conservative Bennett, who still thought in terms of lever- and

pump-action firearms. After a heated argument with Bennett, Browning took his prototype back and attempted to sell it to Remington. But the president of Remington Arms, Mr. Hartley, died of a sudden heart attack just minutes before Browning was to meet with him. As a result, Browning sold the shotgun to Fabrique Nationale (FN) in Belgium, where it was known as the Browning Automatic-5. FN expected the radical new shotgun to take several years to catch on with the public. To their pleasant surprise, they sold out the first batch of 10,000 in the first year they were introduced. Remington would later purchase a license to make the shotgun under its own name, the Remington Model 11.

The idea to create a machine gun came to Browning in 1889 during a shooting meet at the Ogden Rifle Club. He observed how the blast from a friend's rifle parted the tall weeds in passing. Piqued by the waste of excess energy, he was instantly struck with inspiration. Browning immediately

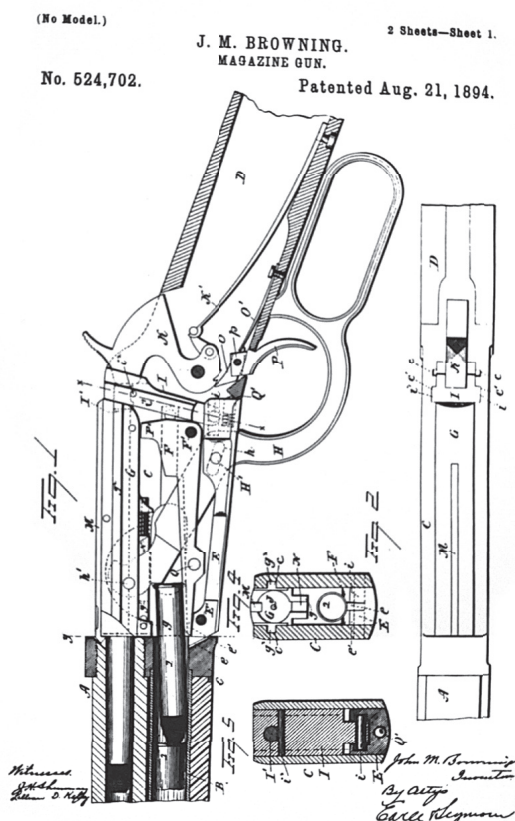


abandoned the shoot and hailed his brothers to take him home. Ed Browning, responding to the puzzled looks of the other shooters who saw John leave suddenly, simply said, "We've got to go back to the shop. Looks like John just thought of something." Heading to the horse rig, Ed asked his brother Matt, "What the hell's struck him, Matt?" Matt in turn asked John, "Yes, John, what the hell's struck you now?" John replied, "An idea hit me, yes sir! An idee, as Pappy was used to say—biggest one I ever had. Get the damn horse going, Matt." As they rode, John explained how the blast from the shooter's gun gave him the idea to harness the wasted gas energy to make a fully automatic fire-arm. Two days after arriving back at the shop, John mounted an old, worse-for-wear Model 73 .44 caliber Winchester rifle on a wooden platform, added some components, and made it fire continuously at 16 shots per second. The sheer audacity to make an old black powder cartridge lever-action rifle fire in full automatic is nothing short of miraculous—for anyone other than John Browning, of course.



John M. Family (left to right) John (Jack), John Moses, Elsie, Carrie, Rachel holding Monida, and Louie.

By 1890 Browning had a practical working prototype and canvas ammunition belts made by a professional tent maker. The prototype had no water-cooled jacket nor a ventilated barrel. It had no tripod or anything approaching a firing grip. Its finish was very rough, with blacked heat welds and hammer strikes embarrassingly visible. It would be easy to mistake the weapon as some kind of a piston and tube component of a larger machine. But it worked, and it worked extremely well. In 1891 Browning demonstrated the machine gun to the Colt Manufacturing Company, personally firing 200 rounds of 45/70s without a hitch. In a second demonstration before an audience of several military representatives, the test required that he fire 1800 rounds in three minutes. The barrel turned



1894

The Browning-designed Model 1894 Lever-Action Repeating Rifle, best known as the Winchester 30/30, was the first sporting rifle to use the new smokeless powder cartridges.

2461 Washington Ave., Ogden, Utah

1155 Main Street, Salt Lake City.

JOHN M. BROWNING,
MATT S. BROWNING



Ogden Utah 22nd Nov. '90
Colt Pat. F. A. Mfg. Co.

Dear Sirs:

We have just completed our new automatic machine gun & thought we would write to you to see if you are interested in that kind of a gun. We have been at work on this gun for some time & have got it in good shape. We made a small one first which shot a 44 W. C. F. chge at the rate of about 16 times per second & weight about 8 #. The one we have just completed shoots the 45 Gov't chge about 6 times per second & with the mount weight about 40 #. It is entirely automatic & can be made as cheaply as a common sporting rifle. If you are interested in this kind of guns we would be pleased to show you what it is & how it works as we are intending to take it down your way before long. Kindly let us hear from you in relation to it at once.

Yours Very Truly
Browning Bros

Original Letter from Browning Brothers to Colt's Patent Fire Arms Company, 1890.

Dear Sirs:

We have just completed our new automatic machine gun & thought we would write to you to see if you are interested in that kind of a gun. We have been at work on this gun for some time & have got it in good shape. We made a small one Inst which shot a 44 W. C. F. chge at the rate of about 16 times per second & weight about 8 #. The one we have just completed shoots the 45 Gov't chge about 6 times per second & with the mount weighs about 40 #. It is entirely automatic & can be made as cheaply as a common sporting rifle. If you are interested in this kind of gun we would be pleased to show you what it is & how it works as we are intending to take it down your way before long. Kindly let us hear from you in relation to it at once.

Yours Very Truly,
Browning Bros.

1895

John M. Browning demonstrated a crude gas-operated, fully automatic machine gun to Colt in early 1891. After further fine-tuning, Colt started manufacturing the Colt Model 1895 Automatic Machine Gun. The Navy ordered 50 units in 1896 and 150 more Model 95s in 1898.

Machine gun (20), and pistol (23) images posted online. See "The First 100 Years of the 1911," at www.gunworld.com



red hot, a lead mist enveloped John Browning, and his body cramped terribly securing the gun during firing. But when it was over, every round had been expended, and none of the weapon's components failed during the stress of the demonstration. To say those who witnessed the event were impressed is an understatement. They were awestruck and wild with enthusiasm at the gun's performance. They considered his machine gun vastly superior to the Gatling guns then in service. But without military contracts, Browning's wonder gun would lie fallow until 1895, and even then only the U.S. Navy contracted with Colt for a small number of the Browning-designed machine guns. His Colt Model 95 "Peacemaker" machine guns received their first baptism by fire in China, where the U.S. Marines used them to great effect defending the foreign legations during the Boxer Rebellion.

America's armorer

When the U.S. declared war on Germany in 1917, its military arsenal was sadly wanting. Until arms production could be put into full gear, the U.S. army had to buy machine guns from its allies. Ironically, the Lewis gun was invented in the U.S. but was not adopted by its military. It now had to be purchased from the British government. But at least the Lewis had a good reputation for reliability. In contrast, the French 8mm Chauchat was totally unsuited for the rigors of combat

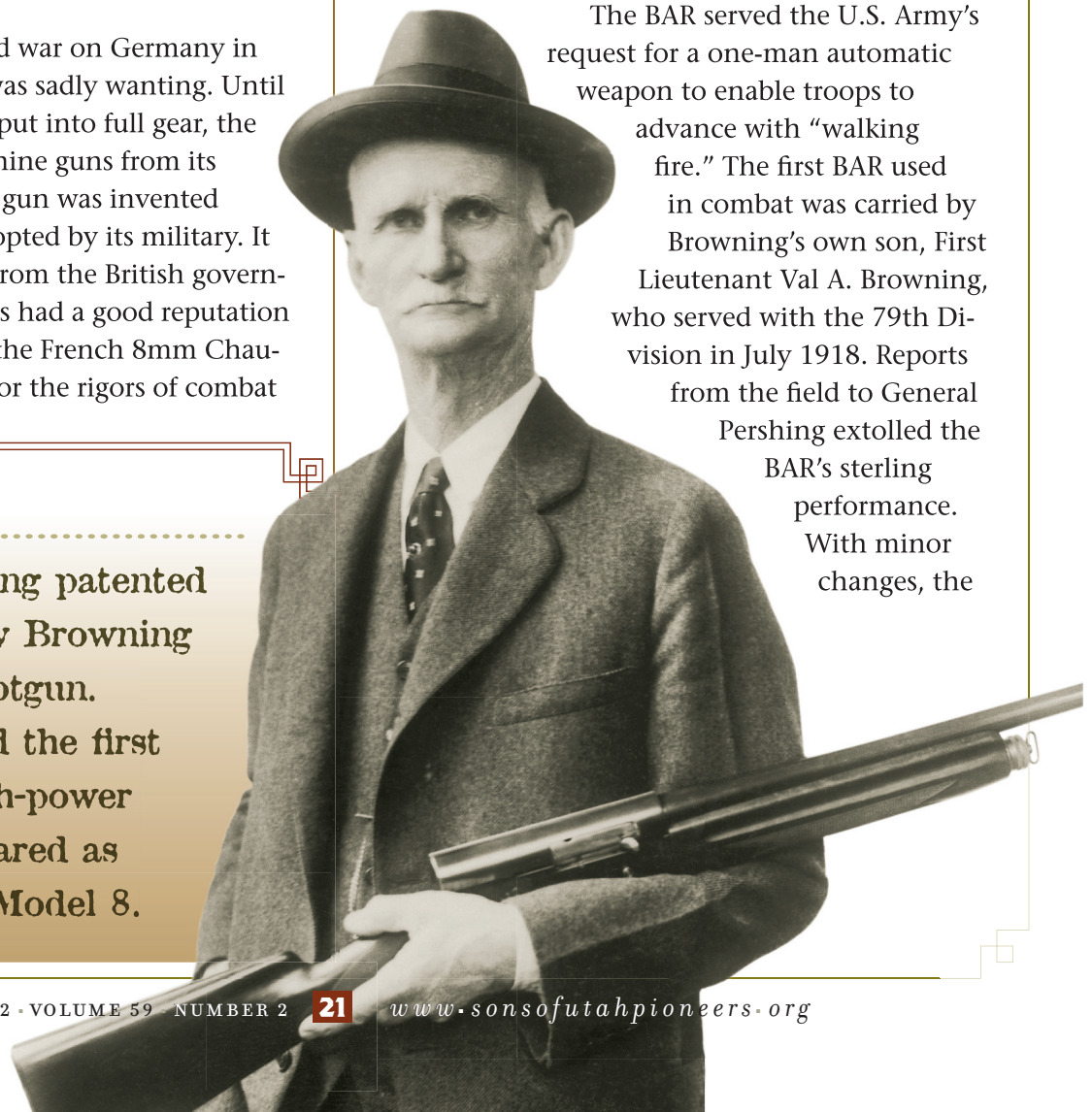
in the muddy trenches of the western front. Its 250-rpm rate of fire was dismal for a machine gun. The Chauchat was so poorly designed that it had to be fired in short bursts or in semi-automatic mode to prevent it from jamming due to overheating. U.S. soldiers at the western front were in desperate need for something better.

When approached by the government for help, Browning selflessly sold the rights on his 1911 Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR) and other machine gun designs for only a fraction of their commercial value: He earned just three-quarters of a million dollars compared to the estimated \$12 million in royalties he could have otherwise received. When his brother Matt complained about accepting the government's first offer and not haggling over the price, John replied: "Yes, and if we were 15 or 20 years younger, we'd be over there in the mud."

The BAR served the U.S. Army's request for a one-man automatic weapon to enable troops to advance with "walking fire." The first BAR used in combat was carried by Browning's own son, First Lieutenant Val A. Browning, who served with the 79th Division in July 1918. Reports from the field to General Pershing extolled the BAR's sterling performance. With minor changes, the

1900

John M. Browning patented his revolutionary Browning Automatic-5 Shotgun. He also invented the first autoloading, high-power rifle which appeared as the Remington Model 8.



BAR would serve again in World War II and the Korean War.

With the introduction of tanks in WWI, the call went out for an anti-tank weapon to counter them. Browning took his 1917 .30 caliber machine gun design and up-scaled it to .50 caliber. It was designated as the M2, but most soldiers affectionately called it "Ma Deuce." Still going strong after 92 years of service, the M2 is one of the oldest firearms still in use in the U.S. arsenal. Though evolving tank armor soon changed the M2's role as an anti-tank weapon, it became standard equipment for U.S. military vehicles, aircraft, ships, and infantry. It established a proven track record as an effective anti-aircraft, anti-light vehicle, and most definitively, as an anti-personal weapon. When the German General Erwin Rommel, "The Desert Fox" of North Africa, captured Tobruk from the British, he discovered a quantity of .50 Browning M2s. After Field Marshal Herman Göring congratulated Rommel on his victory, he added; "If the German Air Force had had the Browning .50-caliber, the Battle of Britain would have turned out differently." The Japanese used M2s obtained from their early Pacific conquests as a template to make an effective 20mm auto-cannon for their aircraft. Quad-mounted M2s on halftracks became the great equalizer for outnumbered U.S. troops facing massive Chinese human wave attacks during the Korean War.

One of the M2's finest moments was on January 26, 1945. During an attack by six German tanks and a superior force of infantry at Holtzwihr, France, Lieutenant Audie Murphy ordered his troops to withdraw while he stayed behind to call in artillery strikes. As the Germans closed in, Murphy leaped on top of an abandoned, burning U.S. tank destroyer and employed the mounted M2 like a scythe against the enemy soldiers. Scores of the enemy were killed, some as close to 10 yards of his position. The German tanks, without



1902

John M. Browning made the first of his 61 transatlantic voyages to visit the Fabrique Nationale arms factory in Liege, Belgium.

infantry support, withdrew. Lt. Murphy was wounded during the action, and for his courageous efforts he received the Medal of Honor.

Copied and often imitated, the efforts to replace the M2 with lighter weapon platforms like the XM312 have met with disappointment; modern technology has yet to surpass the bedrock reliability and performance of Browning's century-old design.

Creating a legend

Of all of Browning's outstanding firearms, the one recognized as his signature work is the .45 ACP Colt 1911 automatic pistol. Prior to the 1911, automatic pistols as a whole were fragile, unduly complicated, and prone to jamming under harsh environmental conditions. The majority of the calibers available were marginal in performance, at best. Browning's 1911, initially produced by Colt, has since been reproduced in some shape or form by almost every gun manufacturer up to the present day. To explain its popularity as one of the best selling pistols for almost 100 years, it is necessary to revisit its origins.

The .38 caliber revolver in service with the U.S. military during the Philippine insurrection (1899–1913) was found to be ineffective against charging Moro natives. The call was issued for a more powerful handgun for U.S. military personnel. Competitive trials for a new pistol were held on March 3, 1911. Each gun had to successfully fire 6,000 rounds, followed by another trial using deformed ammunition to further test reliability.

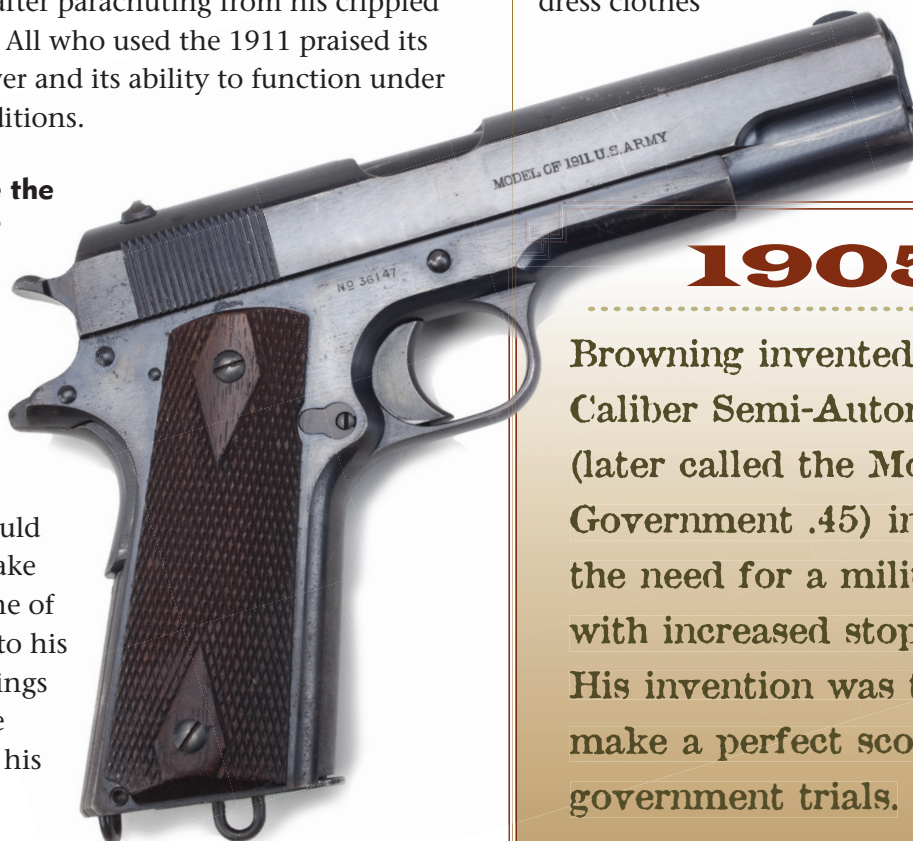
The trial lasted two days. When the 1911 fired its last round, a nearby soldier who assisted in loading the magazines exclaimed, "She made it, by God!" At his acceptance speech following the pistol trial, Browning concurred that he had little to add to the young soldier's statement.

Until it was replaced (and not without some heated controversy) in 1985 by the 9mm Beretta 92, the 1911 served faithfully in every U.S. conflict. It was first put to the test in General "Black Jack" Pershing's pursuit of Pancho Villa during the border war with Mexico. Sergeant York utilized a 1911 during his Medal of Honor feat in capturing 132 German soldiers in WWI. A backhanded testament of the pistol's reputation came from those who practiced an extremely dangerous endeavor of illegal employment. Notorious criminals Pretty Boy Floyd, Machine Gun Kelly, John Dillinger, and Bonnie Parker were killed or captured with 1911s in their possession. Among the many exploits involving the 1911, one account even credits a WWII pilot with shooting down a Japanese Zero that was strafing him after parachuting from his crippled B-24 bomber. All who used the 1911 praised its stopping power and its ability to function under wartime conditions.

You can take the boy from the country...

From his humble roots as a country boy raised in the Utah desert, Browning would ultimately make a second home of Belgium due to his ongoing dealings with Fabrique Nationale. In his

typical do-it-yourself philosophy, Browning taught himself French so that he would not be limited to using a translator to converse with the FN craftsmen. Among the local citizens of Liege, the six-foot tall Browning became a familiar sight as he took frequent walks wearing his broad-brimmed hat and cape. His reputation at FN was such that he was respectfully referred to as "Le Maitre," or "The Master." In 1914, in appreciation for help making FN a world-class arms manufacturer, he was knighted to the order of Leopold by King Albert of Belgium. Browning found such awards embarrassing, in no small part for the expected ribbing he would receive from his country-bred brothers on the royal title "Sir" now prefacing his name. Few men enjoy such acclaim and recognition while alive. Fewer still are those who do not let that fame change them. Notwithstanding all the wealth and recognition he received during his lifetime, Browning was never happier than while at his workbench, working on a new gun. His brothers related that he would seldom bother to change from his dress clothes



1905

Browning invented the .45 Caliber Semi-Automatic Pistol (later called the Model 1911 Government .45) in response to the need for a military sidearm with increased stopping power. His invention was the first to make a perfect score in the government trials.

after entering the shop, but instead would jump right in and get to work. His mother, Elisabeth, best summed up his work ethic. When reminiscing on John as a young child using tools, she would close with the oft-repeated statement, “And there’s been grease on John’s face to this blessed day!”

While celebrating Thanksgiving in Liege in 1926 with his family, John M. Browning suc-

cumbed to a sudden heart attack and passed away. He was 71 years old. In honor of his selfless contributions to the U.S. military, a military escort was provided for his final trip home. Secretary of War Dwight F. Davis gave the eulogy at his funeral.

John Moses Browning’s contributions to the advancement of firearm technology continue to live on long after his death. His work helped transition

Early photo of Browning Brothers Company building (left); original building still in existence (right).



Below: John M. Browning’s original workbench in Ogden, Utah.



1911

Browning Brothers moved to 2451 Hudson Avenue. “Everything for Every Sport for Every Season” was the company’s advertising slogan. In 1929, the retail store was closed and the gun development continued under the name Browning Arms Company.

John M. (21), and workbench (24) images posted online at <http://forddouglas.org/jmb2011/index.htm>

gun technology from the age of black powder and percussion caps to modern-day smokeless ammunition and full automatic fire. As summed up by gun historian Philip Sharpe, "Browning developments all had one peculiar and very necessary feature. They worked, and kept on working. There are few

modern guns today that have not been influenced one way or another by Browning's hand."

The secret to Browning's success is best explained by an incident involving his brothers Ed and George. One day, his brother George noticed that Ed had abandoned the workshop where John was working furiously on a gun project.

"Why aren't you working upstairs?" George asked. Ed replied, "Oh, John's stuck. He's swearing every little while. He doesn't know whether I'm there or not."

"That's too bad. I thought it was coming along fine."

"Don't worry, it won't be long now. John's so hot that something has to give pretty soon—and it won't be John." ▮

Ron Shirtz is a transplanted Californian teaching Graphic Communications in northern New York.

Source: John Browning and Curt Gentry, *John M. Browning, American Gunmaker* (New York: Doubleday, 1964). Copyright © 2009 by LewRockwell.com. Reprinted with permission.

1917

Browning invention of .50 caliber machine gun.

1918

The Browning Automatic Rifle (B.A.R.) introduced in combat by the inventor's son, Lt. Val A. Browning.

1921

John began work on his first aircraft cannon; within three months it was successfully test-fired.

1923

Browning's last two inventions—the Superposed Shotgun and the 9mm Hi-Power Pistol—still in production.

1926

Death of John M. Browning.



Paintings (14, 25), photos (8, 18–19, 22, 24), sculpture (16), and sketches (17, 19), on display at the John M. Browning Firearms Museum, Union Station, Ogden, Utah. Additional black & white photos (15, 17, 21, 26–27) courtesy Betsey Lee Browning, Union Station Museum Archives, Ogden, Utah.



Fabrique Nationale BELGIUM



Above: French advertisement for Browning rifle. Left oval: John M. Browning at Liege, Belgium, at Fabrique Nationale Herstal. Monument below located at 2510 Washington Blvd., Ogden, Utah.

On display at the John M. Browning Firearms Museum, Union Station, Ogden, Utah



First Production Model: Serial No. 1.
Fabrique Nationale, Belgium 1903–1976.

Last Production Model: Final tribute.
Serial No. 1. Miroku, Japan 1976–1999.

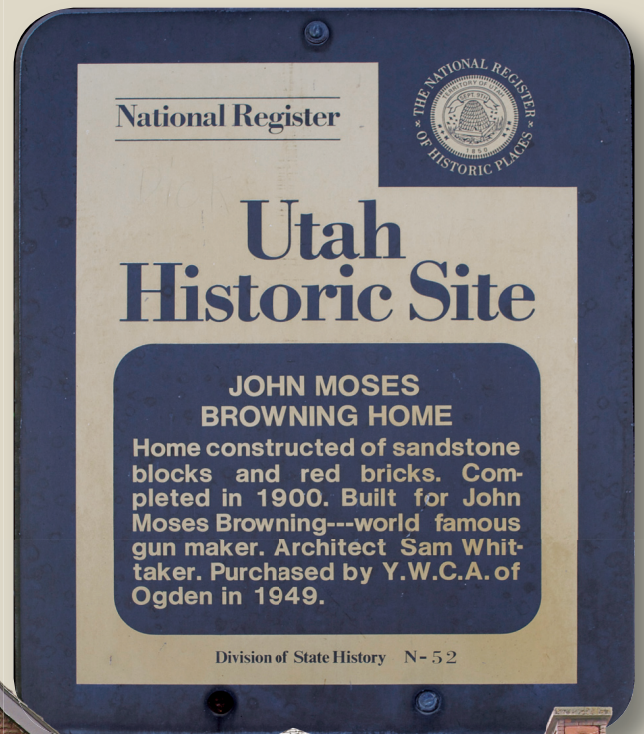


JOHN M. BROWNING

WORLD RENOWNED
FIREARMS INVENTOR
BUILT A GUNSHOP AND
MANUFACTURING FACILITY
AT THIS LOCATION IN
1880

THE ABOVE PLAQUE IS A DUPLICATE OF THE ONE
PRESENTED BY THE BELGIUM GOVERNMENT
AND PLACED IN THE FIREARMS FACTORY IN
LIEGE BELGIUM.
ERECTED BY THE BROWNING COLLECTORS
ASSOCIATION 1995

Monuments & Markers



John Moses Browning home

, located at 505 27th Street in Ogden, Utah, was built between 1890 and 1900. John built the mansion for his wife Rachel Teresa Child. The mansion was built of red sandstone and a rippled red brick and was completed in 1900. The family set off fireworks from the top of the house to celebrate its completion.

John raised his family in this home until his death in 1926. His son, Val Browning, lived in the home until 1940.

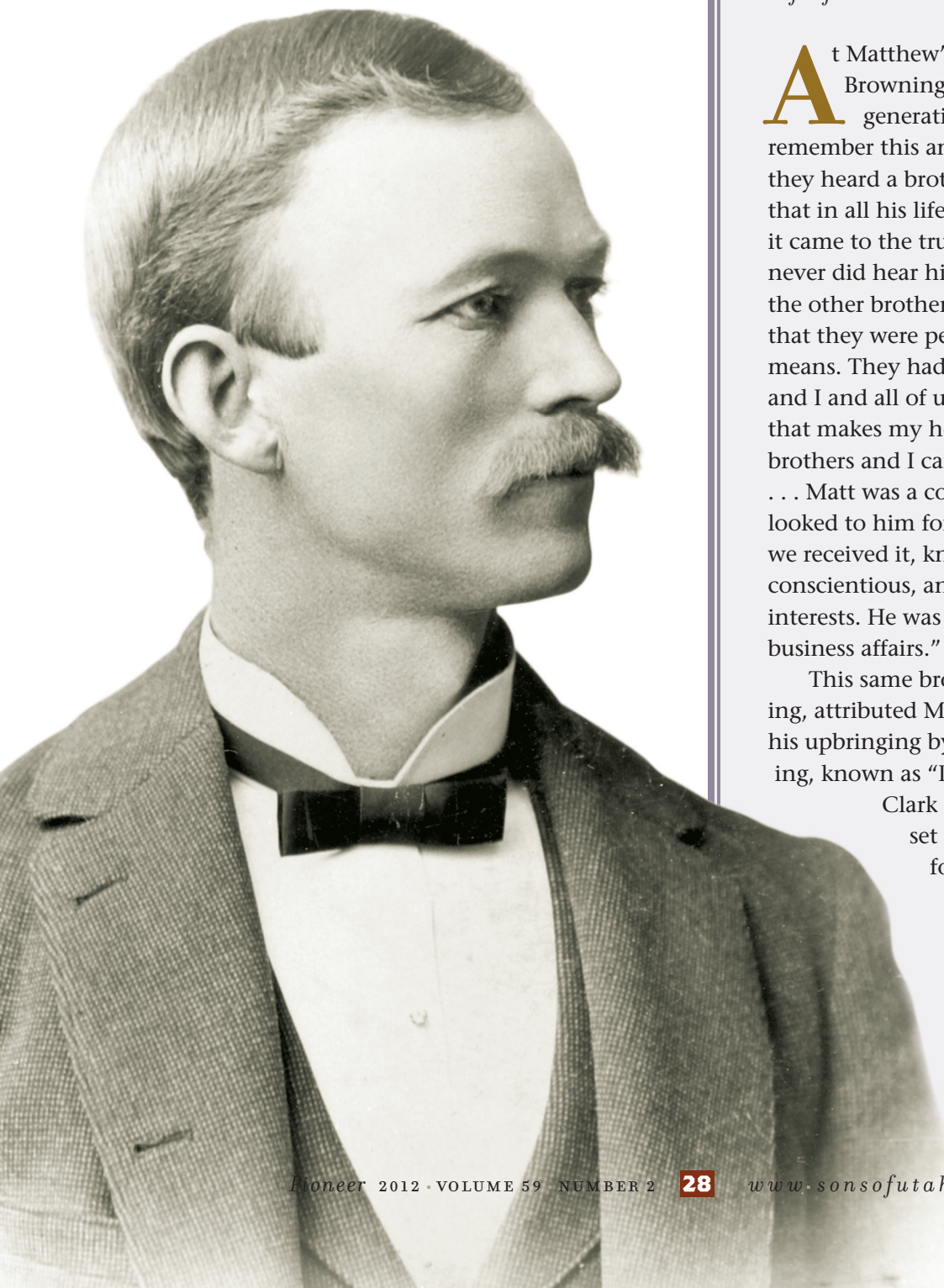
The front porch area has been modified, but generally, the home has retained its historic style. The property was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973. ▼

See "John M. Browning Mansion," at www.alwaysogden.com/?p=32

Photo by DianaLBrks at flickr.com



Matthew Sandefur BROWNING



BY BETSEYLEE BROWNING,

wife of Deven Browning, Mountain Green, Utah

At Matthew's funeral, his half-brother Sam Browning stated, "I want all the younger generations of the Brownings to remember this and tell their descendants, that they heard a brother of Matt Browning say that in all his life and dealings with him, when it came to the truth and the straight truth, he never did hear him tell a falsehood, nor any of the other brothers with whom he worked. Not that they were perfect men. No, not by any means. They had just as many faults as you and I and all of us, but this is one of the things that makes my heart proud, to think that my brothers and I can say this and say it in truth. . . . Matt was a counselor to all us boys. We looked to him for counsel and instruction, and we received it, knowing that it was honest, free, conscientious, and that it would be for the best interests. He was the governor of many of our business affairs."

This same brother of Matthew, Sam Browning, attributed Matthew's honest dealings to his upbringing by his parents Jonathan Browning, known as "Pappy," and Elizabeth Caroline Clark Weir. Jonathan and Elizabeth set an example for Matthew to follow in raising his children.

Matthew was born on October 25, 1859, in Ogden, Utah, and blessed on April 2, 1863, in the Second Ward. He was baptized by John McQuarrie and confirmed by Charles Franklin Middleton in the

The two brothers (John M. and Matthew) have formed a happy combination. John M. as the inventive genius and Matthew S. as the successful businessman. Both are genial, delightful men to meet and they wear their honors without ostentation, which, almost invariably, is the stamp of genuine worth. —Ogden Standard

Second Ward on July 2, 1868. His father, Jonathan, employed his young sons in his multiple businesses to keep them out of mischief. Matthew was likely educated through the elementary level, then known as a common school education. Matthew was one of three children born to Jonathan and Elizabeth, but his sister Elizabeth Caroline died as an infant. His older brother, John Moses, was his constant companion throughout his life. In October 1869, John Mose, as he was called, gave Matthew a unique birthday present of a slide rifle that he had made out of spare parts from his father's gunshop.

Jonathan had three wives: Elizabeth Stalcup, Elizabeth Caroline Clark Weir, and Ann Emmett. In 1860 Elizabeth Caroline and Ann Emmett lived in the same wooden house. According to the 1860 census, Matthew's mother, Elizabeth, had personal property of her own valued at 50 dollars. Jonathan and his wife Betsy (Elizabeth Stalcup) were recorded to be living next door.

Elizabeth Caroline Clark Weir Browning had previously been married to John Thomas Weir in Illinois. She had two daughters with John Weir: Mary Eliza Weir and Nancy America Weir. She and John divorced sometime between 1850 and 1853. Jonathan Browning and Elizabeth raised the two girls as their own. Matthew and John considered their half siblings to be their brothers and sisters. The children from Jonathan's first marriage were mostly gone and raising families by the time Matthew came along, so Matthew was closest to the children of his father's third wife, Ann Emmett.

Matthew, or Matt, as he was nicknamed, was a family man. He had a loving relationship with his wife, Mary Ann Adams, also called "May." Mary Ann Adams, born August 30, 1864, in Ogden, Utah, was the daughter of Samuel Ferry Adams and Sarah Elender Wiggins. Matt and May rode with Ed Browning (Matthew's brother) and Mary Ann Roxanna Jones on their way for both couples to be married in the Logan Temple on December 17, 1884. There is a family story that after the wedding, the boys were sitting around chatting so long that the brides went to bed in the same bedroom, leaving the bridegrooms behind.

In 1900 Matthew built a red sandstone home at 2700 Washington Avenue for his large family. His brother John Moses built the same floor plan but with a reversed layout about a block away at 505 27th Street. John's home still stands today.



The four Utah shooting champions in 1892. The Four B's are from left to right: Gus L. Becker, John M. Browning, Archibald P. Bigelow, and Matthew S. Browning.

"Elect Matt Browning mayor of Ogden, and you will entrust the affairs of your city with a man who will see that justice is done. . . . His strength is due to the principles he represents, the interests that he has in Ogden's growth and prosperity, and the qualifications he possesses that will make his administration a success."

—Ogden Standard Examiner, Nov. 6, 1899



One year Mary requested a Christmas gift of a jar full of pennies and nickels to give out to the homeless men that came to the door. Supposedly these men had marked the house of Matthew Browning as a place to visit, as the residents were generous. Matthew tried to find the mark on his property but could never discover it.

Matthew and John Browning formed the J.M. & M.S. Browning Company in spring of 1878. Matthew was responsible for the financial and public relations side of the business, and John was the inventor. An article in the *Ogden Standard* stated, "The two brothers (John M. and Matthew) have formed a happy combination. John M. as the inventive genius and Matthew S. as the successful businessman. Both are genial, delightful men to meet and they wear their honors without ostentation, which, almost invariably, is the stamp of genuine worth. M.S. Browning, on whom the financial responsibilities have rested, is a loyal Ogdenite. This is the city of his birth—this is his home. The prosperity he has brought to the copartnership out of the brother's inventions has gone to make Ogden a larger, more beautiful city. There is no one in Ogden who does not rejoice in the success of Browning Brothers because they are deserving, and, furthermore, because the money of the Brownings is being spent to develop not only Ogden, but the surrounding territory."

Matthew explained his philosophy about the use of guns: "I one time had a man infer that he expected to find a set of desperados when he met the Browning brothers. He found them different. He had the idea that we invented something for the slaying of men. I told him that we did not consider it so, that the perfection of firearms meant the ending of the war rather than its continuance. People will take a chance of being killed, but when guns are perfected so that death is certain, they will not stand up simply to be killed. It is not human nature. Perfection of guns means the ending of wars and of deaths from the use of such arms."

Matthew was part of the shooting group called the Four B's, which included Matthew, John M. Browning, Gus M. Becker, and Archibald Pierce

Bigelow. The four of them competed in shooting matches at the Ogden Shooting Club. In 1892 they were Utah shooting champions. Matthew also liked to go camping and go on hunting trips. He was an outdoors enthusiast.

The *History of Browning Guns* states, "Matthew was interested in the development of many industries in the West. He became one of Utah's most successful bankers and a leader in the sugar, soft coal, railroad, mining, and ranching industries. Always a civic-minded man, he worked hard to make his hometown a better place in which to live. Much of the civic growth and development of Ogden is a result of the efforts of Matthew S. Browning."

In 1896 Matthew related, "I went to the City of Mexico for the purpose of testing our automatic gun, the 'Peacemaker,' before a commission of army officers appointed by the Mexican government. Our object was to illustrate to the commission the practicability and utility of the gun with a view to its adoption by the Mexican government as the army gun. The test took place just outside the City of Mexico on the 15th July and was immeasurably successful. The government officials congratulated me on the success and the way in which the gun operated. They informed me straight out that their report to the government would be as strong in favor of the gun as they could make it. I do not think that any other army board ever informed any agent of their intentions in such an open manner.

"On my return I visited some gold and silver mines 200 miles north of the City of Mexico in which we are interested. I remained there about 10 days and investigated the mines very thoroughly and was very much pleased with the investigation. We are putting up a mill on the properties which we expect to have running about the end of next week."

Matthew was the mayor of Ogden from 1898 to 1899. An advertisement from the *Ogden Standard Examiner* newspaper, dated November 6, 1899, reads: "Ran for Mayor on Democratic ticket 'Elect Matt Browning' mayor of Ogden, and you will entrust the affairs of your city with a man who

will see that justice is done. Mr. Browning is not trying to make political capital by manufacturing a 'pull' with men, who are continuously watched by the officers of the law. His strongest friends are among the representative men of the city. His election is not a question of relationship, but his strength is due to the principles he represents, the interests that he has in Ogden's growth and prosperity, and the qualifications he possesses that will make his administration a success, not from a partisan standpoint alone, but a success which the citizens would naturally expect when they elect a man who is public spirited, intelligent, and well trained in business. Support Matt Browning. He has made a clean campaign and will give you a clean administration." Two of his half brothers, George E. and T. Sam Browning, were also mayors of Ogden.

Matthew was a Democrat, and in 1912 many of his friends wanted him to accept the Democratic nomination for governor of Utah, but he declined.

Matthew was president of the Ogden school board for 10 years. He was in great part responsible for the progressive spirit of the board, which resulted in the construction of many of Ogden's present school buildings.

Matthew was involved in fundraising with Friends of the Library. He told the Reverend John Edward Carver to come to see him if he ever needed funds for the library.

In 1915 Matthew Browning was nominated to head the Utah Bankers' Association. Browning's election was quickly made unanimous.

In July 1922 three Ogden banks were consolidated: the First National, the Ogden Savings, and the Utah National bank.





Marriner S. Eccles, president of the First National and Ogden Savings banks, became president of the consolidated bank. Matthew S. Browning, who had been the president of the Utah National bank, was made the chairman of the board of directors of the consolidated institution.

His obituary reads, "Mr. Browning was director of the following corporations: Utah Idaho Central railroad, Lion Coal company, Utah Construction

company, Amalgamated Sugar company, Utah Power and Light company, Deseret National bank, Oregon Lumber company, Mount Hood railroad, Sumpter Valley railroad, Utah Rapid Transit, and many other corporations. He was chairman of the board of directors of the First Utah National and Savings bank and vice president of J.M. and M.S. Browning companies."

Matthew had a fatal heart attack at the age of 63 on June 29, 1923, in Ogden. . . . At the time, John Moses was out of town on business at the Winchester Repeating Arms Company in Hartford, Connecticut. The account from Matthew's obituary is as follows: "June 29, 1923, started out as a normal day. Matthew's wife was staying at Bear Lake, Utah, at the family's vacation home with daughters Blanche and Gene.

. . . [Later when Matthew] entered the law offices he was not feeling well. He felt weak and asked for a place to lie down. Mr. DeVine was going to send him to Dr. Dumpke's office when Matt suffered a severe heart attack. The doctor and [Matthew's] son, Marriner S. Browning, were sent for. Marriner arrived and was recognized by his father, but [Matthew] passed away minutes later after muttering Marriner's name. . . . Many of [Matthew's] friends . . . sent

telegrams of condolences to the family from all sections of the United States."

The funeral of Matthew Sandefur Browning was held in the Ogden Tabernacle. The pallbearers were J. E. Browning, T. S. Browning, George E. Browning, A. P. Bigelow, G. L. Becker, Joseph Scowcroft, Dr. Ezra C. Rich, and John Browning. President Heber J. Grant spoke at the funeral, along with T. Samuel Browning and Reverend J. E. Carver. Matthew was interred at Ogden City Cemetery, Ogden, Utah.

Mary died of heart troubles on July 12, 1926, and is buried next to her husband at the Ogden City Cemetery. Her obituary states, "She was a prominent member of the Martha Society, of which she was a former president. Mrs. Browning was also a member of the LDS Church and a resident in the Second Ward for many years." ▢

1 Funeral service of Matthew Browning, Church History Library.

2 LDS Church 2nd Ward, Ogden, Utah. Family History Library, film 0026249.

3 1860 U.S. Census. Ogden, Weber Co., Utah, United States. Family History Library, film 805313.

4 *Ogden Standard Examiner*, Feb. 2, 1914.

5 "Leader in Firearms Manufacturing," *Ogden Standard Examiner*, Feb. 2, 1914.

6 *A History of Browning Guns from 1831*. J.M. & M.S. Browning Co., Ogden, Utah, 1942.

7 "Return of M. S. Browning: The Peacemaker Is a Success and Likely to be Adopted by the Mexican Government," *Ogden Express*, Aug. 5, 1896.

8 *Ogden Standard Examiner*, Nov. 6, 1899.

9 Obituary of M. S. Browning, *Ogden Standard Examiner*, June 30, 1923.

10 Obituary of M. S. Browning, *Ogden Standard Examiner*, July 1, 1923.

11 Funeral service of Matthew Browning, Church History Library.

12 Obituary of Mary Ann Browning, *Ogden Standard Examiner*, July 15, 1926.

Photos (28–32) courtesy Betsey Lee Browning, Union Station Museum Archives, Ogden, Utah.



Indian Mother

by D. J. G.

Originally published in the August 1936 issue of Pioneer.

During the winter of 1858 a band of Ute Indians numbering about 100 with two Chieftains, Panogas and Oqua, came to camp at Rockport, Utah. Permission was obtained from one of the farmers to camp near his home. Consent was given on the condition that not a thing nor a person of the white settlement be in any way molested or appropriated by the Indians. They pitched camp in the low brush of the foothills, in a square covering about one mile. The men and boys hunted deer, elk, and other game and also took part in the begging of bread stuff from the pioneer villagers nearby. If more meat was killed than could be immediately consumed by the Indians it was dried (jerked) by the womenfolk. Short posts were driven in the ground in the form of a square. Small poles were laced over these to form a grate, then brush was laid closely over these poles. The meat was cut in slices resembling steaks. These slices were laid closely together over the brush. A fire was built underneath the brush heap and kept constantly burning and smoking. The meat was sundried and smoked, turned often, until dried through, then stored away for future use.

Each day the farmer received a visit from Panogas and Oqua, who talked fairly good English. They often presented the family with fresh meat from their kill. In one of these families there was a little boy. This youngster became a great favorite of the Chieftains. He liked to cuddle into their laps and admire their buckskin clothing—shirt, pants, leggins and moccasins—or stand by and stroke the heavy hair of their buffalo robes. His mother often chastised him for his familiarity with these Indian Chieftains, saying, "You smell exactly like those Indians."

One day a new teepee appeared above the camp a way up near the top of the mountain. The villagers were advised that the Great Spirit was sending a new papoose to that teepee, for a young squaw was soon to become a mother, and she, with two Indian maiden

attendants, must occupy this hut until three weeks after the little papoose arrived. The Indian braves often went up to the teepee with fresh provisions and made inquiries, and after their visit they would slide down the snow-covered mountainside to their village below. For seven weeks the exile lasted, then, one day the young mother and her new babe were allowed to come down off the mountain. The mother was taken to the river and a hole chopped through the ice and she was plunged several times through the hole into the icy waters. After the several submergings of the mother, her new babe received one generous dip. Both were then wrapped in heavy buffalo robes and carried to the Indian camp.

According to the Indians these rites were necessary as a purification ceremony, and the mother and her babe would not be allowed to associate with the tribe in camp until this purification ceremony had been administered.

Just once during that long winter was the promise made by the Indians broken. One day a squaw returned to camp with some potatoes which had been stolen from a farmer's potato pit. Immediately the chief went to the farmer to inquire whether or not the squaw had been given these potatoes. Upon hearing that the farmer was not aware they had been taken, the chief gave a solemn assurance that such a theft would not occur again.

During sunny afternoons in the springtime, the cattle from the nearby farms were allowed to roam near the Indian camp. In a playful mood, the young Indians would frighten them by waving their large buffalo robes at them until one day they caused the cattle to stampede. The owners of the herd were enraged and frightened the Indian boys by telling them that the settlers had sent for the U.S. soldiers to come for them. After hasty consultations the Indians "folded their tents and silently stole away." ▣



Lorenzo Sobieski Young

Interview with Lorenzo Sobieski Young by Harold H. Jensen, former historian of the Sons of Utah Pioneers, originally published in the June 1936 issue of Pioneer.

An interesting character among Utah pioneers who received much homage was Lorenzo Sobieski Young [born Mar. 9, 1841]. So far as is known he was the last surviving member of the original company who came with President Brigham Young to the Great Salt Lake Valley in 1847. He and Isaac Perry Decker were the two children in the original pioneer company of 1847. Up to the time of his death, which occurred March 28, 1924, at Shelley, Idaho, he was active; his memory was clear.

His life was one of varied experiences. He had not the opportunities that many have had, for his chief avocation was herding sheep, even from the days of his boyhood.

Mr. Young delighted in telling of bygone days and would sit for hours speaking of experiences of the past. His reminiscences could fill volumes. . . . The aged pioneer could not read nor write "very much," so he said, for his life had been one of hard work and he "never had time to learn." In signing his name, his hand had to be guided over the paper, yet his hand and arm were firm. . . .

"Though I was only a child when my parents brought me to the valley, there are some things clear in my mind. I was one of the boys in the first company. I remember when the company got to the top of Little Mountain we were asked to get out and run down the

hill to make the load lighter. I ran like the other children and I recall how we had to stop and be carried across a stream as we were too small to wade it.

"Like others who first recollect this valley it is still clear in my mind's eye as a long stretch of sage brush plain. Those were hard times, my boy, and we had to look out a good deal for ourselves. Of course being just a mite of a lad I can't remember much of the first year, but the main things that impressed themselves on my mind are still clear.

"I recall that my job was helping herd sheep. That's about the main thing I had to do all my life and that's why I ain't had much education. I remember how scared I was of those howling wolves, especially when the lightning and thunder came. One night when out in the hills I remember lightning flashed and thunder roared. The wolves were howling and I began to run. It was a wonder I wasn't killed, for I ran right down the steep hills in the pitch dark as fast as I could go. Then I hid my head under some quilts to keep out the noise.

"All my life I've been sheep herding and got my education out of doors. I can get much out of it that others can't seem to appreciate. For hours and sometimes weeks in the hills my only company was my dog, especially when I was older so they'd trust me more. What reading and writing I got, I just picked up somehow and I haven't ever been able to really read or write



much, especially write, and now my eyes won't hardly let me read at all.

"When I was a young man I was called to go down and help settle the muddy country. We left everything behind and set out for that place, and boy, we sure had some hardships. Floods came, food got scarce, and if it hadn't been for God watching over us, I don't think many of us would be here now. I remember one flood especially. It was a big one, and we was sent out to warn the settlers downstream. First of all we went out after a widow. We found her on what might be called an island. The house had floated downstream, leaving her high and dry on the foundation. We went to her rescue, but when we got her a little ways off she made us go back to rescue her cat. Further downstream we found a man in his wagon box floating along and we rescued him.

"Later on after getting married, I moved quite a number of times, and now my home is in Shelley, Idaho. I still have my little farm and do some farming yet. I love my home and like to keep going, and though I feel old age creeping on, still last year I did all my own gardening, though my sons didn't want me to. My wife is still living and most of my children.

"Most of all I enjoy meeting my old friends. I am the only one left of two original boys now. I remember Perry Decker in Draper. [Isaac Perry Decker was the other of the two child pioneers of 1847 still living at this time]. He and I used to love to compare times today with those of yesterday. We couldn't help but feel thankful for the differences, for the old times was hard time, lad. We knew what it was to go hungry, to hunt weeds for food, and to go for weeks in the hills herding sheep, with our only friend the Good Lord above, who, thank goodness, never deserted us."

In summarizing how to stay young, the philosophy of this veteran is interesting: "Live simply, live actively. . . . Get into the open; follow outdoor pursuits; do as much of the farm work as possible; live in comfortable surroundings."

He seemed to have found the secret of youth, for adventure in the wilderness that he helped make "blossom as the rose" kept him young. ▣

8th Annual Malad Valley Welsh Festival

Thursday, June 28–Sunday, July 1, 2012

June 28 Family History Day

Malad LDS Family History Library
1250 North 1100 West, Malad

Featuring experts in Welsh, Irish, and English genealogy from the LDS Church History Library in Salt Lake; community lunch.

June 29–30 Welsh Festival

Malad City Park and LDS 2nd Ward Building
20 South 100 West, Malad

Featuring presentations by Ron Dennis on the persecutions that drove the Welsh to America; other presentations on the harp in Welsh traditions, Welsh language, tracing Welsh tribes through DNA; presentation and book signing by author of a book about Carmarthen; choral concert, youth concert, piano duet concert, Celtic musicians and dancers; displays of Malad Valley pioneer families; pioneer games; horsedrawn wagon rides; community lunch and breakfast; food and home craft booths; biathlon; quilt show; film festival; tours of Presbyterian Church and Davis-Osmond cabin.

July 1 Fireside

Malad Presbyterian Church: 7 South Main, Malad
Featuring stories about the 130-year-old Presbyterian church and a concert by male vocal soloists; refreshments.

Come to a weekend of fun! There is something for everyone—whether you are Welsh or not!

See www.welshfestival.com for more information, or call Malad City Hall

208-766-4010

January 2012

David E. Bott
 Roger O. Burke
 Keith Carrigan
 David M. Corn
 Stephen Crosland
 Dan L. Greenland
 James R. McAllister
 Don Payne
 Kenneth R. Richey
 Ted Stagg
 Calvin R. Stephens
 Mark E. Walker
 Charles W. Watson

February 2012

Kenneth L. Bickmore
 Ashby D. Boyle II
 Gary R. Carlson
 Nelson Knight
 Kent C. Parke
 Gary N. Ray
 Adam C. Roberts
 Klar Robinson
 Rick Smith
 Roland K. Smith
 Jack C. Thorpe
 Jay M. Todd

March 2012

William K. Bindrup
 Allen Christensen
 William L. Coats
 Frank H. Cutler III
 James Dennis
 John Franson
 Reid Gale
 Ralph G. Goates
 Berl A. Gordon
 Joel D. Hardy
 R. David Harrison
 William G. Hartley
 Kimball Harward
 Paul W. Kirkpatrick
 Orvy E. Lords
 Brent Marshall

Clyde R. Naylor
 Patrick Phillips
 Delwyn L. Richardson
 Myron Richins
 Jay Roseborough
 James F. Stanton, Jr.
 Bruce T. Taylor
 David B. Thompson
 Dennis H. White
 Andrew B. Woolf
 David N. Wright

April 2012

Daniel K. Adams
 Kay Barton
 Edward R. Brewer
 Clifton M. Browning
 George Herrmann (Life)
 G. Lymon Jackson
 Paul Jackson
 Ronald W. Lamb
 Jeff Mathews
 Daniel T. Park
 Curtis M. Paskett
 Roger Petersen
 Carl Readicker
 Alton L. Thygerson (Life)
 T. Alan Walker
 Norman L. Weitzen

May 2012

Frank D. Anderson
 James H. Brough
 Dumas Crocket
 Sterling G. Emfield
 Richard Gappmeyer
 Thomas J. Hardcastle
 Kevin Jackson
 Paul D. Lyman
 Joseph B. Nelson
 Alan G. Noall
 Kenneth Noall
 Val L. Petersen
 Stephen E. Wight

Deceased Members**Box Elder**

Don C. Call
 Nathan T. Chappell
 Leslie Darrington
 Arland DuVall
 KV Hansen
 C. Morgan Hawkes
 Wayne Johnson
 Blaine Olsen

Brigham Young

Dan R. Bird
 Lawrence L. Epperson

Cedar City

Charles H. Blackburn
 Paul W. Warby

Centerville

Gustov Horn
 Kenneth Madsen
 Stan Smoot

Eagle Rock

Moroni "Rone" Clawson

Grove City

Eddie Ellis
 Roland Lish

Hole in the Rock

Alumas C. Barlow
 Robert Munson
 James C. Schow

Jordan River Temple

John D. Adams

Maple Mountain

Robert Kerr

Mills

Edward M. Jenkins
 Lloyd Martin

Morgan

Dale H. Thurston
 M. Reed Wilde

Mount Nebo

Clyde D. Westwood

Murray

Gene Peaden
 Cal Reynolds

Ogden Pioneer

Ferrell Carter
 Blair Dahl
 James Meikle
 William H. Shurtleff
 Keith Wilcox

**Pioneer Heritage/
Canyon Rim**

Robert H. Graham

Red Rocks

Roger J. Chamberlain

Salt Lake City

Robert C. Sloan

Sevier Valley

Paul Turner

Squaw Peak

Garth Allred
 Coleman W. Jacobson
 Richard Losee

Sugarhouse

Joseph W. Gunn
 William M. Wright

Taylorville/Bennion

Ralph Mackay

Temple Fork

William L. Coats
 Don Fullmer
 Calvin L. Pehrson
 John Simmons

Temple Quarry

Charles L. Wright

**Annual Members
Converted to Life****January 2012**

Verd J. Erickson
 Ronald J. Ford
 Dan L. Greenland

February 2012

Donald L. Eastman
 Earl W. Gates



Sons of Utah Pioneers

UPCOMING EVENTS

Days of '47 Celebration Annual Sunrise Service

Tuesday, July 24

7:00 a.m.

**in the Tabernacle
on Temple Square**

Featured speaker

Elder Steven E. Snow

*of the First Quorum
of the Seventy*

Elder Snow was called to serve as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy in March of 2001. He currently serves as Church Historian and Recorder and is the Executive Director of the Church History Department. Elder Snow previously served as a member of the Presidency of the Seventy, Executive Director of the Priesthood Department, and President of the Africa Southeast Area of the Church.

**Music by the
Utah Voices Choir**



JULY 21, 2012

6:00 P.M.

**This Is the Place Heritage Park
Garden Place**

Pioneer costume **OR** come as you are

Refreshments and live entertainment
with music and pioneer dancing

Come and enjoy

**a good old-fashioned
pioneer experience**

For more information, visit us online at

WWW.SONSOFULAHPIONEERS.ORG



Nostalgic Balm

by Elizabeth MacDougall

*There grows beside a desert cabin door
On western plain, a morning glory vine.
Each day a sun-browned woman bends before
The struggling plant, as if it were a shrine.
The Souvenir of all she counted best
Resents the alien soil from which it drew
Scant nourishment. Its root gropes deep in quest
Of prime New England loam, its parents knew.
The woman, yielding not to nature's ban,
Caresses leaf and bloom through homesick tears.
This transferred bit of "home" has bridged the span
Of desert miles to girlhood's cherished years.
Her heart finds balm for its nostalgic pain
As she visions, here, a vine-wreathed door in Maine.*

RELIEF SOCIETY MAGAZINE, OCTOBER 1958